

PETER PAN PLAYGROUP

ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

We aim to create an environment where children are safe from potential abuse.

To do this we will use these procedures in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

There may be up to three strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- A police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- Enquires and assessment by children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services
- A consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual

Whenever an allegation is made against an individual who works with children in either a paid or unpaid capacity, as an employee or a volunteer, procedures must be followed.

All allegations must be followed up regardless of whether the person involved resigns his or her post

Where their allegations of abuse or where there is suspicion, organisational responses must be prompt through independent and proportionate to the issue of concern.

Information about an allegation must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to

- Protect children
- Facilitate enquiries
- Manage disciplinary/complaints aspects
- Protect any rights of the alleged perpetrator

Action to be taken upon identifying a concern or receiving a concern:

- If a member of staff is suspicious or has received allegations of abuse by a colleague, s/he must report this to the Supervisor.
- If the Supervisor is implicated in the allegation then the concern must be reported to the Chairperson of the Committee or another senior person if the Chairperson is the subject of the allegation.

- In all situations the Councils Lead Officer for West Sussex can be consulted for advice to staff and managers if the concerns constitute sufficient grounds for the initiation of child protection procedures on 01243 642555 between the hours of 09:00 – 17:00 and out of hours the contact number is 01903 694422. Children’s Social Care and/or the police CPT may be consulted for advice
- During such consultations, the need to refer matters that may constitute an allegation of crime to the police at the earliest opportunity must be actively considered.
- Any member of staff who believes that allegations or suspicions, which have been reported to the supervisor or Chairperson, are not being investigated properly has a responsibility to report it to a higher level.
- If for any reason, there are difficulties with following the above procedure, the whistle blowing procedure should be considered or a referral made directly to Children’s Social care or the police child protection team for advice contact 01243 642555.
- In all cases a record of the report, which is timed dated and includes a clear name or signature must be made
- The recipient of an allegation should not determine its validity; Failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.
- The need for consultation must not delay a referral.